

# County of Santa Cruz

# CURBSIDER

NOVEMBER 2009

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**Why  
should  
I sort?**



# Why Should I Sort?

*“I carefully separate my recyclables from my trash, and then the garbage company dumps it all in the same truck,” a Live Oak resident complains. “Why should I bother?”*

Here is a bird's eye view of one of Green Waste Recovery's new automated trucks. The photo shows the diverter plate that the driver flips to send trash to one side of the split-body vehicle and recycling to the other. A view from the street would give the impression that all the carts are tipped into the same hopper and mixed.

The truck compartments are cleaned out when the loads are dumped so the next load of a different material is not contaminated. Sometimes the trucks pick up garbage and yard waste on the same run.

While the garbage is buried at the Buena Vista Landfill, everything that residents put in the recycling bin is carefully sorted at the MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) into dozens of categories and sold to manufacturers to make into new products.



## We Can Stop Junk Mail

Unsolicited mail does more than waste our time and invade our privacy; it also contributes to global warming and causes the destruction of Endangered Forests. More than 100 million trees a year are cut down and made into paper for junk mail. That's why San Francisco-based non-profit ForestEthics has launched a campaign calling for a national Do Not Mail Registry, modeled after the popular Do Not Call Registry, to give people a choice to stop their unwanted junk mail and promote a code of best practices for all direct mailers to help ensure that mail goes to the people who actually want it and to minimize the environmental footprint of their paper use.

To support federal legislation to establish a Do Not Mail Registry, sign ForestEthics' petition at [www.donotmail.org](http://www.donotmail.org). For more information please call Charlie Fredrick, ForestEthics Paper Campaigner, at 415-863-4563 x330. For tips on steps you can take now to reduce the amount of junk mail you receive, please see “Stopping Junk Mail” at [www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org).

# Recycle That!

It's not just bottles and cans anymore. The list of what can be put in the blue bin keeps getting longer. Did you know all these can be recycled in the County's curbside program?

## Plastic Utensils

But wait; don't throw plastic knives, forks and spoons in loose. To keep these small items from being screened out into the residue at the sorting facility, secure them in a clear plastic bag. Of course, rinse or wipe off food residue. "Taterware" or other compostable utensils must NOT be put in the recycling bin as they will degrade the quality of new products meant to be durable.

## Metal Bottle Caps

Remove metal caps and lids from glass and plastic bottles and put them in your blue bin loose. Magnets and other sorting machinery can easily separate these.

## Household Batteries

Flashlight, DVD player, hearing aid, cell phone, smoke alarm, etc. batteries can no longer legally be put in the trash. Seal them in a clear plastic bag and put it ON TOP of your blue cart so your recycling driver can easily find them. AA, AAA, C, D, 9-volt, button, and rechargeable cells are all acceptable. Please put a piece of tape over the contacts of Lithium batteries, which can spark even when discharged, to reduce fire hazard.

## Frozen Food Boxes

These are made of high quality paper fiber with a barrier to keep them from absorbing moisture or oils from food products. Milk cartons and aseptic drink boxes are similar. People commonly think of a slick-surfaced box as "waxed," but the barrier is actually a thin film of polyethylene plastic on one or both sides of the cardboard. The recycling process involves vigorous agitation of scrap paper in a hot water solution which breaks the surface barrier and releases the paper fibers. Plastic and foil are removed by a screening process and discarded as waste by-products.

## Plastic Bottle Caps

Leave these on plastic containers. Or if they are loose, bag them up in clear plastic with other small hard plastic items such as eating utensils.

## Hard Plastic Items

Handle break off the plastic laundry basket? Hole in the bucket? Broken toy? All of these items that fit can now be put in your blue cart. Please remove metal parts, which can be put in the blue bin separately. Larger hard plastic items may be dropped off at a disposal site recycling center.

All items accepted in the County's curbside recycling program may also be dropped off at the recycling centers at the Buena Vista Landfill and Ben Lomond Transfer Station, although customers are required to separate materials into multiple categories.



# Keeping your Green Clean!

Would you use compost in your yard if it was full of plastic and broken glass? The universal answer is no. We need your help to "Keep our Green Clean" by making sure you put only yard waste and clean wood in your curbside yard waste cart or in your vehicle if you haul your green materials to the landfill or transfer station. Do not use plastic bags to collect your yard waste, or put glass, plastic, cans or garbage in your yard waste cart. By following these simple rules, you are helping to make the compost and mulch products we create beneficial for our gardens, parks and agricultural community.



# Diversion Rate Hits 54%

*for Green Waste Recovery residential customers. By weight, 32% goes in the recycling cart and 22% goes in the yard waste cart. Of all discards, only 46% ends up in the garbage cart.*

## What Are We Still Throwing Away?

Of the 46% that we're putting in the garbage cart:

14% = Cans, bottles and paper (that belongs in the blue recycling cart)

10% = Yard trimmings and clean wood (that belongs in the green yard waste cart)

23% = Vegetable food waste (that could be composted at home)



This is on top of a high recycling rate of 54% of residential garbage already diverted into recycling or yard waste carts. If these remaining items were diverted to the recycling cart, yard waste cart and compost bin respectively, up to 75% of residential discards from Green Waste Recovery customers could be kept out of the landfill.

The current 54% diversion from home garbage is an improvement over a 47% diversion rate found in a similar study in December 2007. When drop-off recycling at the Buena Vista and Ben Lomond disposal sites which includes large volumes of scrap metal and construction and demolition materials is taken into account, the overall diversion rate is much higher. The state agency overseeing waste management calculated a landfill diversion rate for the unincorporated county at 70% for 2007.

This data comes from studies of residential collection in the unincorporated county of Santa Cruz in August 2009. These are preliminary results of the first round of a waste composition study being conducted by Cascadia Consulting Group under contract with the County of Santa Cruz and the cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Watsonville to help local governments plan waste management strategies and enhance waste diversion efforts.

Good news is that very little hazardous waste was found in residential trash (less than a tenth of 1%). The primary hazardous items identified were household batteries and oil filters, both of which are accepted in the curbside recycling program if a little attention is paid to proper preparation.

## Keep yard clippings and debris off the stream bank and out of the creek



Be sure to put yard clippings in your green waste container or compost away from the stream. Yard clippings dumped on stream banks will kill vegetation underneath and can lead to bank erosion and can wash downstream and plug culverts, leading to flooding and property damage. In addition, yard clippings get caught in large woody material and increase the hazard of flooding and bank erosion by blocking the stream flow.

You should also know that the County has a new policy that restricts when large woody material will be cut up in stream channels. Large woody material in the creek—fallen logs, stumps, root wads, and large branches—provide important habitats for steelhead trout, Coho salmon, other native fish and aquatic animals, and should be left in the stream.



# Greening the Holidays

What's the real meaning of the holidays? Wouldn't a healthy planet be a precious gift to give to our children and grandchildren? In order to deliver this gift in good condition to future generations, we will want to be good stewards today. Considering the welfare of the planet and all its inhabitants now termed "being green" leads us to challenge a few traditions.

The period between Thanksgiving and Christmas is traditionally the biggest shopping season in the U.S., and we produce 25% more trash than usual during this time. For every product we buy, ten times its weight in garbage and pollution was already generated in the manufacturing processes before it even reached the retailer's shelf.

With a little imagination, joyous celebrations with those you love can occur without creating waste or environmental harm. Consult the many lists and sources of eco-friendly holiday tips for ideas. Besides "green purchases" which still involve consumption but with a supposedly lighter environmental impact, tips include zero waste options such as giving gifts that can be experienced like a homemade dinner or tickets to a show.

*Wishing you Happy and Green Holidays!*

## Holiday Tree Recycling

Trees will be chipped for mulch to help plants grow or for fuel to generate electricity. Please remove ornaments, tinsel, and metal and plastic stands before recycling. For curbside collection, please cut larger trees – 6 foot maximum length accepted unless otherwise noted.

### NO FLOCKED TREES PLEASE!

### Free Curbside Pickup Jan. 4-22

Holiday trees will be picked up at the curb from GreenWaste Recovery residential customers in early morning on regular garbage collection days. Businesses and apartment managers, please call your waste hauler to inquire about pickup and drop-off options. Please cut trees to 3' lengths.

### Free Drop-Off Dec. 26-Jan. 17

Residents may drop off holiday trees for recycling at special bins at these locations daily during daylight hours except as noted.

**Boulder Creek:** Fire Station, 13230 Central Ave.

**Ben Lomond:** Transfer Station, Newell Creek Rd.  
Closed Jan. 1 Hours: 7:30-3:30

**Felton:** Fire Station, 131 Kirby St.

**Santa Cruz:** Resource Recovery Facility, Dimeo Ln.  
Closed Sundays & Jan. 1 Hours: 7:30-3:30

**Live Oak:** E. Cliff Shopping Center, rear parking lot

**Soquel:** Fire Station, 4747 Soquel Dr.

**Aptos:** Fire Station, 6934 Soquel Dr.

**Capitola:** Jade Street Park, Community Garden

**La Selva Beach:** Clubhouse, rear on Florido Ave.

**South County:** County Landfill, Buena Vista Dr.  
Closed Jan. 1 Hours: 7:30-3:30

**Freedom:** Fire Station No. 2, 370 Airport Blvd.

**County of Santa Cruz Public Works**

701 Ocean Street, Room 410  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2160

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# Recycling Resources

**Recycle Information Line** 831-454-2333  
• What and where to recycle (recorded message)

**Curbside Refuse, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection** 800-665-2209  
• Begin new service  
• Report missed recycling or trash service  
• Request delivery or removal of carts  
• Obtain oil recycling jugs

**County Public Works Dept.** 831-454-2160  
www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org  
• Apartments and business recycling inquiries  
• Complaints, compliments or suggestions

**Household Hazardous Waste** 831-454-2606 (recorded message)  
• Schedule for free disposal  
• Non-hazardous alternatives  
• Free surplus paint

**Ecology Action** 831-426-5925  
www.ecoact.org • www.ecocruz.org  
• General recycling information

**Rotline Composting Resources** 831-423-HEAP (423-4327)  
• Worm Doctor 831-427-3452  
www.compostsantacruzcounty.org

**Buena Vista Landfill** 831-454-2430 (recorded message)  
• Recycling Center: 479-1055  
(Operated by the California Grey Bears)

**Ben Lomond Transfer Station** 831-454-2430 (recorded message)  
• Recycling Center: 338-1728  
(Operated by the Valley Women's Club)

**City of Santa Cruz Resource Recovery Facility** 831-420-6270 (landfill)  
• Open to Unincorporated County residents in Davenport and Bonny Doon only



Para información en español sobre el reciclaje en las áreas no incorporadas del condado de Santa Cruz, favor de llamar al (800) 665-2209.